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First Mexican Records of Tropical American Birds

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The broad outlines of Mexican ornithology undoubtedly have been traced but there is ample evidence that continued field work is justified even in those areas that have seen most activity.

Indicative of the paucity of detailed information regarding the distribution of bird life in southern Mexico are the numerous extensions of range brought to light by two collections made in Oaxaca and Chiapas by Mario del Toro Aviles for the Chicago Natural History Museum. Of special interest are four characteristically tropical American birds that constitute additions to the Mexican fauna.

***Caprimulgus maculicaudus* (Lawrence)**

Oaxaca: Tutla (1478 meters) 4 males, 6 females, January 1—April 22, 1941.

Comparison of this series with 31 South American examples of the species, including the type of *romainei* Carriker, fully establishes the monotypic status of *maculicaudus*. The most rufescent of the Oaxaca specimens is practically indistinguishable from the type itself, and all other skins in the Mexican series can be matched individually by specimens from Colombia, Bolivia, French Guiana and Brazil.

The migratory status of this rare species is not known with certainty, but available data suggests that it is relatively sedentary. Three birds from Para, the most southern locality for which I find specific dates, were collected April 28 and 30. Seasonal migration can hardly account for the presence of *maculicaudus* in Mexico since numerous other records from widely scattered South American localities bear dates extending from August to February.

Discovery of an undifferentiated and evidently isolated population of this characteristically South American species in southern Mexico, approximately 1000 miles north of its known range, is one of the most surprising

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additions to the Mexican fauna in recent years. A detailed discussion of these birds, and their relationship to the South American population, is in manuscript (Blake).

Rhytipterna holerythra holerythra (Sclater and Salvin)

Oaxaca: Tutla (1478 meters). 2 males, 1 female, February 22—March 30, 1941.

Previous inclusion of this cotinga in the avifauna of southern Mexico was tentative, having been based solely upon an unsexed adult skin labeled "Mexico" in the British Museum. Tutla specimens constitute the first definite records for Mexico and extend the known range of the genus northward from Alta Vera Paz (Choctum) by almost 200 miles.

The belated discovery of *holerythra* beyond the Isthmus of Tehuantepec probably is due in part to its solitary habits, but emphasizes once more the need for continued field work in an area that has supported considerable collecting in recent years.

Sayornis nigricans aquatica Sclater and Salvin

Chiapas: Ocosingo; Palma Real (1600 meters). Male, female, March 12, 16, 1947.

The variability found in representative series of *nigricans* has been discussed by van Rossem (Trans. San Diego Soc. Nat. Hist., vol. 6, 1931, p. 263) who called attention to the cline-like trend exhibited by birds from Panama to Oregon. Specimens from the extreme south have the abdominal patch of white very much restricted and the under tail coverts uniformly blackish, whereas to the northward there is a progressive trend towards more extensively white posterior underparts and total elimination of pigmentation in the crissum. The reality of taxonomically separable populations in so uniform a cline is largely a matter of opinion. Nevertheless, in the present instance, there seems to be ample justification for the recognition of *aquatica* as sub-specifically distinct from more northern populations.

Hitherto the range of *aquatica* was regarded as extending northward only to Guatemala, being replaced in Mexico by the nominate race and by *semitrata* (Vigors). This distributional concept is modified by the Ocosingo specimens which must unquestionably be allocated to the southern race. Both specimens have the restricted white abdominal patch and dusky under tail coverts of *aquatica*, the crissum of one being entirely black. In evaluating these dual characters it is clear that the former (extent of abdominal patch) is more nearly diagnostic and stable, since birds having an immaculate crissum occasionally occur within the range of *aquatica*.

Ptilogonys cinereus molybdophanes Ridgway

Chiapas: Ocosingo; Palma Real (1600 meters). Male, female, August 26–September 3, 1947.

The male agrees in all significant characters with birds in comparable plumage from the Guatemala highlands. Some degree of intermediacy with the nominate race is suggested by the female, which differs from typical *molybdophanes* in being less pure brown generally, and in having a grayer crown and throat, the latter being somewhat contrasted with the breast.

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